



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 8 April 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
8 APRIL 1967

1. South Vietnam

Another civilian political leader is about to enter the presidential contest. Former prime minister Tran Van Huong is planning to announce this weekend.

Like Constituent Assembly Chairman Suu, the other main declared civilian candidate, Huong is a prominent southerner. This means that the largest potential reservoir of votes against the military candidate in the coming election could well be split two ways.

2. Vietnam

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3. Aden

The United Nations "fact finding" mission--after six gunfire-ridden days spent mostly locked in hotel rooms and presumably under the beds--left yesterday with more haste than dignity. The three members--a Venezuelan, a Malian, and an Afghan--saw almost nothing, refused to talk to the local government, and were spurned by the nationalists for whose cause they showed considerable bias.

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4. Israel-Syria

The border is quiet so far today, following major ground and air engagements yesterday. The clashes were touched off when Syrian troops fired on Israeli tractors working fields in a disputed border area.

There are conflicting claims as to losses in the air battles. The Israelis certainly came off best, however, and probably consider they have proved their military superiority.

[REDACTED] For their part, the Syrians probably realize they are unlikely to get much beyond propaganda support from Cairo and their other Arab friends.

There may be some further clashes, but we doubt that either side will soon seek another major engagement.

5. Soviet Union

An unusually large number of flights into Tyuratam over the last week suggests that the Soviets are preparing a major space launch. It is difficult, however, to be sure about the nature or timing of an event solely from flight activity. We expect to pick up other indications, such as deployment of space support ships.

6. Soviet Union

Last year Soviet gold reserves increased about 10 percent--the first upswing after a decade of steady decline from some \$3 billion down to \$1 billion. Barring an emergency similar to 1963-65, when wheat purchases from the Free World necessitated massive sales of gold, we expect Moscow's reserves will rise slowly through the next several years.

7. Dominican Republic

President Balaguer has misgivings about being out of the country next week. He fears right-wing civilians may try a coup, or otherwise embarrass the government during his absence.

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While we agree that serious strains are developing in the country, we see no indication of specific plans to take advantage of Balaguer's absence. He is expected to show up at Punta del Este-- and ask for assurances of continued US economic and political backing.

8. Venezuela

Guerrilla activity in rural areas has increased markedly in recent weeks. In the cities, however, the government's countermeasures have put a real crimp in terrorist attacks. The problem now is that practically all government troops are already committed to counterinsurgency operations, leaving no reserve to cope with new outbreaks.

9. Turkey

President Sunay's visit is getting extensive and favorable attention in the Turkish press. Stories about the bomb incident at the Turkish Embassy are receding in favor of those about the communiqué, Sunay's press club appearance, and his invitation to President Johnson to visit Turkey.

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